

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06540 092357Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00
SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 DHA-05 MCT-01 CU-04 SCS-03
CA-01 /075 W
-----040085 100006Z/15

O R 092314Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3624
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR PINT SOPN PN
SUBJECT: OMAR'S RETURN

1. GENERAL TORRIJOS FORMALLY DELIVERED HIS COPY OF NEW CANAL
TREATY TO PRESIDENT LAKAS AT FIFTH OF MAY PLAZA AT 1630 FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 9, BEFORE A MASSIVE CROWD.

2. AUDIENCE, WHICH HAD BEEN ASSEMBLING ALL DAY WITH CONSIDERABLE
OFFICIAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT, WAS ESTIMATED BY
US SOURCES AT AROUND 70,000. ACCURATE CROWD ESTIMATE
IS HIGHLY DIFFICULT--THIS IS SIMPLY TOO MANY PEOPLE FOR THE PLAZA
TO HOLD, AND ASSESSMENT OF NUMBERS MOVING IN ADJACENT STREETS IS
IMPOSSIBLE. GOP WILL DOUBTLESS CLAIM WELL IN EXCESS OF THE
100,000.

3. TORRIJOS' SPEECH WAS MODERATE AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE TO US.
HE HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND MORAL ELEMENT OF
HIS FOREIGN POLICY WHICH HAD LED TO CORRECTION OF THIS LONG-
STANDING INJUSTICE. HE MADE SURPRISING ANNOUNCEMENT THAT
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PLEBISCITE ON TREATY WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23. COMMENT:
THIS IS WELL IN ADVANCE OF WHAT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN PREDICTING
HERE, NAMELY THAT DATE WOULD BE IN MID- TO LATE-NOVEMBER. THIS
MAY HAVE BEEN A GARBLE FOR HE ALSO SAID DELIVERY OF TREATY TO
LAKAS WOULD BEGIN A 64-DAY PERIOD OF NATIONAL STUDY AND DEBATE.
FBIS/PANAMA FILING FULL TEXT OF TORRIJOS' STATEMENT; IF THIS
DOES NOT CLARIFY MATTER, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CONFIRM WITH

GOP MONDAY. END COMMENT.

4. TORRIJOS MADE A SPECIAL PLEA FOR AN ATTITUDE OF "COMPREHENSION" TOWARD THE "ZONIANS"--THOSE POOR THINGS (POBRECITOS) WERE SINCERELY, ALBEIT WRONGLY, CONVINCED THAT THE ZONE WAS THEIRS AND MUST BE FORGIVEN THAT IGNORANCE.

5. OTHER SPEAKERS WERE PRESIDENT LAKAS AND VICE-PRESIDENT GONZALEZ, BOTH OF WHOSE SPEECHES WERE PATRIOTICALLY UNMEMORABLE.

6. CROWDS APPEARED FESTIVE AS THEY GATHERED, BUT (PERHAPS DUE IN PART TO INTENSE HEAT) THERE WAS LITTLE VISIBLE OUTPOURING OF PATRIOTIC ENTHUSIASM, ACCORDING TO EMBOFF AT SCENE, EXCEPT FROM THOSE IN VERY FRONT ROWS.

7. RALLY ENDED AND CROWDS BEGAN TO DISPERSE PEACEFULLY, EXCEPT FOR MASSIVE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, AROUND 1700.

8. AS OF 1800 SEPTEMBER 9, THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS OR APPARENT THREATS DIRECTED TOWARD US, CANAL ZONE OR EMBASSY. A LARGE PART OF CROWD PASSED BY EMBASSY ON ITS WAY TO RALLY WITHOUT TAKING VISIBLE NOTICE OF US. THERE HAD BEEN SCATTERED REPORTS OR RUMORS THAT LEFTIST STUDENTS MIGHT TRY TO DISRUPT RALLY OR FOMENT AN INCIDENT DIRECTED AT ZONE, BUT SECURITY BY NATIONAL GUARD WAS INTENSE AND NOTHING DEVELOPED.

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9. AS OF 1700, USSOUTHCOM HAD IMPOSED TRAFFIC CONDITION BRAVO IN CANAL ZONE, TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS THERE TO STAY HOME AND AVOID FURTHER AGGRAVATING TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND POSSIBLE INCIDENTS IN CROWD. SOUTHCOM ADVISED EMBASSY AND CINC IMPOSED THIS CONDITION BASED ON ACUTE CROWDING, AND PROBABILITY OF CONTINUED REVELRY INTO EVENING, AND NOT FROM ANY INDICATION OF DIRECT SECURITY THREAT TO US INSTALLATIONS OR PERSONNEL.

GONZALEZ

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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